

Story 1932 (1995 Tape 1)

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Nasreddin Hoca's¹ Well-Fed Coat

One day when Nasreddin Hoca was out walking, he came to a home where a wedding celebration was taking place. The Hoca wished to join this party and to eat some of the fine food that was being served there. But because he was wearing clothes that were old and somewhat dirty, he was not allowed even to enter the house.

Nasreddin Hoca thought about this situation for a few minutes and then he returned to his own home. There he put on his elegant fur coat, and a few minutes later he went back to the wedding party. This time he was pleasantly welcomed into the house. They gave him a seat of honor and brought him some of the most delicious food being served there.

The Hoca took off his coat, placed it on a chair, and held up to it some of the food. "Please eat!" he said to the coat.

¹A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a community. In the pre-Republican era the hoca was also the community's teacher, for education was then the responsibility of the clergy. Separation of "church" and state in the Republic required that teachers be people with secular rather than religious training. Nasreddin Hoca belonged to the earlier period. For centuries he has been Turkey's most beloved comic folk character.

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The other guests were astonished by this, and they asked him, “Hoca, how can a coat eat food?”

Nasreddin Hoca answered, “When I came here earlier wearing old clothes, I was not admitted into the house. When I returned later wearing my fur coat, I was welcomed and treated very generously. Therefore the fur coat, not I, deserves the food.”